



# Using the Work of an External Expert



FACT SHEET JANUARY 2025

## WHAT ARE THE USING THE WORK OF AN EXTERNAL EXPERT ETHICS STANDARDS?

The standards establish a principles-based framework that enables a professional accountant (PA) or sustainability assurance practitioner (SAP) to gain the confidence needed about the competence, capabilities and objectivity of an external expert to use the work of that expert in:

- Preparing information
- Performing audit or other assurance engagements (including sustainability assurance engagements)
- Providing advisory and other services

As part of the framework, the standards also contain comprehensive guidance for the ethical conduct of a PA or SAP when they use the work of an external expert.

## WHY WERE THE STANDARDS DEVELOPED?

Increased need for, and use of, external experts on dynamic, emerging, niche or complex subject matters, including technology, sustainability and tax

An external expert's work feeds into information used by investors, lenders, creditors, customers and other users

### Also questions over:

- Whether there is proper evaluation of an external expert's **competence, capabilities and objectivity**
- Risks of undue or over-reliance on an external expert's work
- Given the fundamental importance of independence in audit and other assurance engagements, the steps that should be taken to ascertain an external expert's objectivity when their work is used in such engagements

**A need to strengthen the ethical considerations in the [IESBA Code](#) when using the work of an external expert**

## WHAT ARE THE KEY ELEMENTS OF THE FRAMEWORK?

- Comprehensive **guidance** to drive **ethical judgments** and decision-making when PAs or SAPs use the work of an external expert
- **Principles and guidance** to **evaluate** the external expert's competence, capabilities and objectivity, thereby safeguarding against the risks of undue or over-reliance on external experts by PAs or SAPs
- Further provisions that enhance the rigor of the **objectivity evaluation process** for an external expert whose work is used in an audit or other assurance engagement (including sustainability assurance engagement), consistent with heightened public interest expectations for such an engagement
- A **dynamic evaluation process**, recognizing that circumstances may change both in relation to the external expert and the engagement
- Clear guidance for concluding on whether the external expert has the necessary **competence, capabilities and objectivity** for the PA or SAP's purposes

For more information about the standards: [Technical Overview](#)



The [standards](#) are **effective December 15, 2026**, with early adoption permitted and encouraged



## WHAT ARE THE KEY DESIRED OUTCOMES?



A consistent basis to drive a PA's or SAP's ethical conduct when using the work of an external expert



Confidence to a PA or SAP in the competence, capabilities and objectivity of an external expert in order to use their work



Confidence to stakeholders given their heightened expectations regarding the objectivity of an external expert in an audit or other assurance engagement

## WHO WILL BE IMPACTED BY THE STANDARD?

A wide range of stakeholders will benefit from the enhanced trust and confidence delivered by the standards when the work of an external expert is used by a PA or SAP, including:

- **Investors** and other **users** of financial and non-financial information, as the work of an external expert may feed into the financial or non-financial information on which they rely for decision-making **purposes**
- **Those charged with governance** in fulfilling their oversight responsibilities over management and auditors or SAPs, as the standards may assist their relevant considerations in circumstances where the work of an external expert is used
- **External experts** engaged by PAs or SAPs
- **Firms** (including small and medium practices) that determine a need to use an external expert to deliver their services with integrity and with professional competence and due care
- **Sustainability assurance practitioners**, including practitioners who are not PAs, to fulfill their ethical responsibilities when performing sustainability assurance engagements
- **Preparers** who determine to use an external expert when preparing or presenting financial or non-financial information
- **Those in charge of adoption, implementation, and enforcement** of the standards, including regulators and oversight bodies, market authorities, public sector bodies, national standard setters, and professional accountancy organizations

The IESBA is an independent global standard-setting board. For more about its mission and membership, visit [www.ethicsboard.org](http://www.ethicsboard.org)



*Through intellectual property and service level agreements, the International Federation of Accountants manages requests to translate or reproduce IESBA content. For permission to reproduce or translate this or any other publication or for information about intellectual property matters, please visit [Permissions](#) or contact [Permissions@ifac.org](mailto:Permissions@ifac.org).*

The IESBA®, the International Foundation for Ethics and Audit™ (IFEATM) and the International Federation of Accountants® (IFAC®) do not accept responsibility for loss caused to any person who acts or refrains from acting in reliance on the material in this publication, whether such loss is caused by negligence or otherwise.